

# CAREER NOTES

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## Your Educational Background

### What You Told Us About Your Academic Preparation

In January of this year, 1,082 of you completed and returned questionnaires about your educational background. This information is needed to help assess the potential impact of creating a professional job series for park rangers, managers, and outdoor recreation planners in the Natural Resources Management Branch. The results are encouraging. Well over three-quarters of you responding appear to meet what could become the recommended requirement of 24 semester hours in biological sciences and/or natural resource management coursework to become qualified in the proposed new professional job series.

Findings of the survey indicated that over 4/5ths of you hold a bachelor's degree as your highest degree. Figure 1 outlines the overall degree background. One hundred and forty one of you responding hold two or more degrees of which 89 are master's degrees and 3 are Ph.D.s.

Nine out of ten of you indicated that your present job series is listed as GS-025 (Park Ranger/Manager). The survey was directed to those in the GS-023 or GS-025 series and specialist series such as Foresters and Wildlife Biologists.

Figure 2 illustrates how the numbers of hours in biological sciences compares to the hours in recreation administration among you responding. Almost 3/4ths of you reported over 23 semester hours in biological sciences while only 2/5ths reported over 23 semester hours in recreation administration.

Figure 1. Academic Degrees of NRM Employees

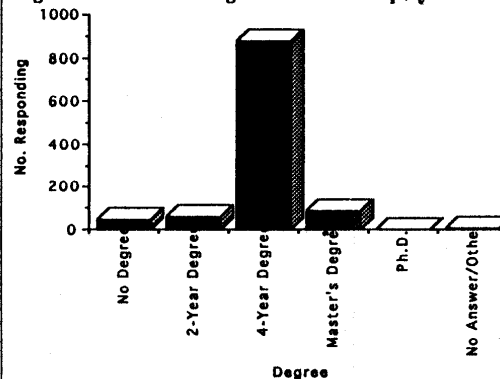
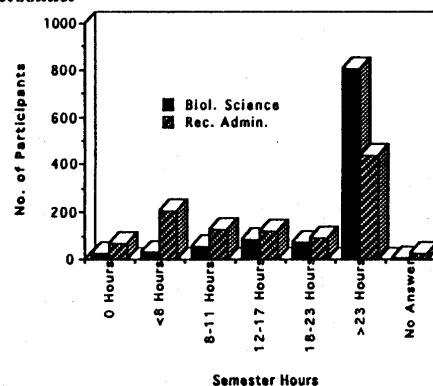


Figure 2. Biological and Recreation Hours of NRM Personnel



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The majors listed were grouped into 25 categories. The largest of those groups was made up of park and recreation/outdoor recreation majors with forestry, biology, and fish & wildlife majors making up a comparable group. Biology was the most commonly listed major with 82 reporting. Forestry was second most commonly listed with 65 majors.

The overall high degree of academic achievement in the existing workforce strengthens our case for the job series.

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## Task Forces

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One way of enhancing career development is to serve on a task force. Some of the recent and present task forces and their purposes that are sponsored by the Chief's Office are listed below:

**Recreation Policy Review Task Force** – Its purpose is to review and modify policies, regulations, and outgrant instruments to assure consistent application of Army policy in various aspects of the Corps recreation program. This will include the development of a clear statement of the Corps role in recreation.

*Darrell E. Lewis - Chair*

**Natural Resources Research Program Strategy Task Force** – Its purpose is to conduct strategic planning for the future of the NRRP in support of the Corps NRM program. The task force will 1) identify major trends in the recreation and natural resources environment which will impact Corps projects, 2) determine focus areas for future research to assure adequate agency insight and available technologies to accommodate those trends, and 3) identify effective avenues for sharing research products and information within the research community at large to maximize natural resource research benefits.

*Andy Anderson – Chair*

**Shoreline Management Task Force** – Its purpose is to review all activities related to shoreline management and reduce activities to the minimum required to protect our interests.

*Earl Groves – Chair*

**Joint Real Estate/Natural Resources Task force** – Its purpose is to make recommendations as to how to create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation, trust, maximum efficiency and positive customer service. The focus will be on efficiency, customer service, and legal sufficiency of these activities.

*Brad Keshlear and Jim Reasoner – Co-chairs*

**Interpretive Services and Outreach Initiative Task Force** – Its purpose is to look at the interpretive program as a whole, 1) reviewing and revising the current regulation, if necessary; 2) determining current status of the interpretive/outreach effort; and 3) providing recommendations to HQUSACE concerning the future of the program, including goals and objectives. The task force will author an action plan for use in the field, and introduce the program across the country at a special kick-off event.

*Kathy Anderson - Chair*

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## Career Planning Manual Coming Soon

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A review draft of *Career Development Plan for Natural Resources Management Team Members* has been forwarded to the Chief's Office for review. This review should clear the way for releasing the document to all locations with natural resources management team members for a field review.

This career planning guide is designed to assist team members in planning, developing, and achieving career goals within the area of natural resources management. It has been written for civilian team members of the Corps within the natural resources management element of the operations division.

The manual contains sections on Advancement of Team Members, Career Development Plans Within Natural Resources Management, and specific career development plan guidance for Park Rangers and Natural Resources Management Specialists, Park Managers and Staffers, Administrative Support, and Facility Management and Maintenance.

We hope you'll give the manual serious scrutiny when it arrives for the field review. After the reviews are incorporated and the final document is approved, it will serve as a career planning guide for natural resources management team members.

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## Coming Soon To A PC Near You

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An electronic bulletin board has been developed to give you easy access to current career development opportunities. Job listings, training courses, and professional meetings will each be posted in a separate portion of the bulletin board. Instructions will be distributed as a special edition of *Career Notes* in about one month.

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# Career Plateauing

## Where Further Promotion Seems Unlikely

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Bonnie Bryson, of the Louisville District, recently completed a study of career plateauing within the District. Bonnie describes career plateauing as "that point in an employee's career when further promotions seem unlikely." Helping employees cope with plateauing is an important function of supervision in the career development process. Bonnie's study examined how widespread career plateauing was in the Louisville District and investigated the differences between plateaued and non-plateaued groups among such variables as demographics, job satisfaction, tendency to change jobs, supervision characteristics, absenteeism, and basis of promotion. Her study included 615 District personnel representing a wide range of socio-demographic characteristics. As might be expected, age was the major difference between plateaued and non-plateaued employees. Out of the 615, 70% reported a marginal or low likelihood of being promoted. They were plateaued. They were likely to be over 40 and veterans with 15 years of government service. Differences were investigated between two groups of employees: one group reporting a high likelihood of promotion and a high desire to be promoted (n=136), and the other group reporting a low likelihood of promotion and a high desire to be promoted (n=166). The plateaued group reported lower levels of job satisfaction and considered changing jobs more frequently. Over two-thirds of plateaued employees sometimes or frequently consider changing jobs. Less than 40% of non-plateaued employees consider changing jobs. Some of the most serious findings in the study concerned feelings about the job, self, and the employer. Commonly, the responses of the plateaued employees were 30-40% less positive than the non-plateaued employees on items such as: Work interesting? Like your current job? Like working for the District? Is your morale high? Are you secure working for the District? Is this a good place to work until you retire? Descriptions of supervisors were generally around 20% less positive for plateaued employees and considerably more positive than the above feelings. Absenteeism was generally 10% lower among non-plateaued employees.

Bonnie reports: "Training programs are needed to inform

supervisors of the critical career counseling function they have relative to plateauing and the damaging effects on the way plateaued employees feel about their jobs and themselves."

### Recommendations For the Corps

Her recommendations for career development counseling relative to career plateauing are as follows:

- 1) *Implement a basic orientation program for professional employees similar to the ones administered by GSA and the USFS. When employees first enter the organization, it is time to indoctrinate them into the agency culture, familiarize them with the organizational structure, outline career development opportunities within their job series, and establish a base for "realistic" expectations.*
- 2) *An agency-specific career planning workbook should be developed (this will soon be distributed for field review - ed.) to complement career planning activities.*
- 3) *Lifetime/career planning programs and activities should be made available to all categories of workers. Those especially neglected at this time from my point of view are the maintenance/facility management and administrative support team members in the organization.*
- 4) *Three developmental programs are needed:*
  - a) *Job rotation - currently permitted in very limited circumstances*
  - b) *Supervisory roles defined and appropriate training developed in regards to career counseling*
  - c) *Mentoring programs - Mentoring is a vital activity within the career development process in an organizational setting. At the very least, the organization should establish a supportive climate and provide basic training about mentoring roles to allow such relationships to flourish within the agency. You can contact Bonnie at Louisville District Office, ORLOR-R, P.O. Box 59, Louisville, KY 40201, for a copy of her study.*

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*Career Notes* is a quarterly newsletter of the Natural Resources Management Career Development Steering Committee designed to address concerns and needs of field personnel in the areas of training and career development. You may communicate with *Career Notes* directly at the CDSC office or through your Division's representative on the Career Development Committee (see page 4).

John Hanna - Editor

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## CEU Tapes Order Form

### Use This Form to Order NRPA Congress Video Training Tapes

Follow these steps to order the National Recreation and Park Association Video Training Tapes and obtain continuing education units to maintain professional certification:

- 1 - Review the list below, checking off those tapes you'd like to study (check no more than three tapes).
- 2 - If you want CEUs, call or FAX NRPA to order the CEU packets - phone: (703) 820-4940, FAX: (703) 671-6772. Do not order the tapes from NRPA.
- 3 - After you receive the CEU packets, phone or FAX a copy of this order form to the CDSC office - phone: (614) 292-0117, FAX (614) 292-3868. We'll send the tapes to you.
- 4 - Return the tapes within two weeks to the Career Development Committee Office using the provided address label.

- ☐ Social Diversity in America's Recreation & Park Systems
- ☐ Trends in the 90s - How Will You Prepare?
- ☐ Developing a Tailored Revenue Policy for Parks & Recreation
- ☐ Gateways to Tomorrow: Changing Park and Recreation
- ☐ Strategies for the Future
- ☐ Leisure Service Delivery for Americans of Cultural Diversity
- ☐ The ADA: Implications for Change in Park and Recreation Agencies
- ☐ Marketing: Hands-On Techniques for Today and Strategies for Tomorrow
- ☐ Liability Issues in Parks & Recreation: Are You Meeting Standards?
- ☐ Parks & Recreation in an Environmental Era
- ☐ Maintenance: A Systems Approach
- ☐ Americans & the Land: Recreation Resource Strategies
- ☐ Preventive Maintenance in the 1990s - Program Now or Pay Later
- ☐ Headaches and Heartaches - How to Succeed with Youth-At-Risk
- ☐ Park Master Planning - A Participatory Process
- ☐ Access for all People - A Major Issue for the 1990s
- ☐ Managing Conflict, Criticism, and Anger
- ☐ Thinking About the Future Together
- ☐ Communicating Importance of Recreation & Parks in Your Local Community
- ☐ The Economic Impacts of Parks & Recreation
- ☐ Controlling Liability Losses

your name \_\_\_\_\_

your address \_\_\_\_\_

your phone \_\_\_\_\_

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